



BTW Guidelines

Behind-the-Wheel Lesson Plan Guidelines

Teachers should develop written lesson plans for behind-the-wheel instruction and in-car observation that reflect local driving environments. It is also important to have procedures, techniques, and route selections clearly written to avoid tort liability problems. Program administrators should have copies of the routes and lesson plans on file.

The following information will assist in developing route plans for behind-the-wheel instruction and in-car observation.

- ▶ Select a drive route appropriate to the individual lesson objectives and student-driver's ability. Be prepared with an alternate route in case of detours or other traffic problems.
- ▶ At the beginning of each session, make sure the student driver and observer understand the objectives of the lesson, and do a quick review of the preceding session.
- ▶ Be calm and patient, but alert at all times. Do not become distracted from the instructional task. The teacher must maintain the highest level of care at all times to insure the safe operation of the vehicle.
- ▶ Headlights should be used at all times.
- ▶ Mirrors should be adjusted for the student's use; not the instructor's.
- ▶ Sit so the instructor's left hand can be quickly placed on the steering wheel if necessary.
- ▶ Never leave students unsupervised in a vehicle with the motor running.
- ▶ As with any instructional setting, food and beverages must not be consumed in the vehicle.
- ▶ Read the traffic environment ahead, to the sides and behind while observing the student driver's behavior and ask the student to verbalize the need to change direction or speed.
- ▶ When giving directions, first provide students with the path of travel and then state the action to take. (At the second intersection, prepare to turn left.)
- ▶ Give directions four to six seconds before the maneuver, and always check mirrors before giving directions. (The novice driver will take more time to process information than an experienced driver.)

- ▶ Avoid the use of terms with possible double meanings. (Instead of saying “right” to indicate a correct response to a question, say “that’s correct.”) It may be helpful to point in the direction you want the student to go.
- ▶ Demonstrate what and how to do something to save time. (Demonstrations may be as simple as assisting with steering, using the instructor brake, using a drawing or magnetic board, or as elaborate as changing seat positions and actually demonstrating the appropriate actions.)
- ▶ For each new maneuver, coach the novice driver through two or three practice trials, then allow the student to practice the skill without coaching.
- ▶ If a mistake is made, have the student repeat the maneuver and coach him/her, step by step, through the process.
- ▶ For complex skills, give short cues as needed.
- ▶ If a lengthy discussion or explanation is needed, move to a safe place to stop and park the vehicle. Use a legal parking area or parking lot. Do not park or stand on the roadway shoulder or impede traffic flow.
- ▶ Never allow a novice driver to drive “blindly” into a dangerous situation. Take control or give specific directions prior to entering the high risk driving area. Insuring student safety is the teacher’s foremost concern.
- ▶ Involve the student driver in the evaluation of his/her performance. Complete the Student Driving Log immediately after each drive. It is very important to maintain accurate records for each student.

General Guidelines for Developing Lesson Plans

Lesson and route plans should be developed in a manner that is easily understood by anyone reviewing the document. To minimize tort liability and to provide a plan for consistent instruction and performance assessment, lesson plans should consist of the following information.

Title—The title should link the classroom and the in-car activities so any person would be able to look at the lesson and understand the information used to introduce the in-car objectives and procedures – This will also help to insure consistent terminology and descriptive phrases.

Development Date—The route plan should have a lesson plan development date to indicate revisions. This would document procedures and technique refinements and help with future changes and modifications.

Preparation—Make a list of any special vehicle requirements, route challenges, cones, tape measure, or other assessment tools needed for this lesson.

Student Activities—This should identify all the directions, maneuvers, and procedures required of the student to perform the lesson. The directives should be in enough detail to allow any parent, jurist, lawyer, instructor, or administrator to take a novice driver through the lesson.

Instructor Comments—This area is for the instructor to list procedures, diagrams, specialized techniques, and temporary adjustments to the route. This information should be written in a manner that is easily understood by any reader.

Conclusions—This should provide some ideas or lesson review comments, suggestions for improvement, and how this lesson links to the next lesson.

Comments and Drawing Area—Each lesson plan should have a designated area for instructor comments and an area that can be used to draw intersections or demonstrate techniques. The drawings may be directly related to the topic areas or may be left blank for instructor use during the lesson.

Instructional Strategies—This area should list the strategies used to facilitate student learning and involve the observer in the lesson.

Discussion Questions—These questions and answers may be used to initiate problem-solving discussions with the observer and the driver.

Evaluation Procedures—This should explain how the oral and written assessments are accomplished based on local program protocols. Assessment information should be written in such a manner that is easily understood by parents and school administrators.

Route Map—This is especially helpful for new instructional staff, and allows program administrators to locate an instructional vehicle in emergencies.